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China-Leased Ship Loads Grain Here

A grain cargo was being loaded in the Twin Ports today aboard the first ocean-going ship directly operated by the Peoples Republic of China to enter the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system.

She is the Greek flag motor vessel Aristandros, time-chartered to the China National Chartering Corp. of the Peoples Republic of China, which is taking on her cargo at the Continental elevator in Supeior.

Stuart A. McLennan, Duluth, agent for the ship, said the Aristandros will load about 12,600 tons of spring wheat for delivery to Shanghai. The vessel, which arrived Wednesday morning, is expected to depart Friday.

The ship is not the first to load cargo in the Twin Ports for delivery to Red China. Last December 2, the Norwegian bulk carrier Ferngrove cleared Duluth with grain for that nation. The second shipment was made last month aboard the Japanese freighter Yusei Maru. In both cases, the ships involved

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charters to domestic grain companies.

However, C. Thomas Burke, executive director of the Seaway Port Authority of Duluth, said he had been advised by principals handling the Aristandros that the time charter of the Greek bulk carrier to the Peoples Republic represents the first vessel operations by the Chinese in the Great Lakes.

Burke said he had been informed that additional Chinese-operated ships, including those of Chinese registry, are expected to enter the Great Lakes later this year and that Chinese traffic at the lakes' inland ports may become substantial during the 1974 navigation season.

The Aristandros, 485-foot vessel, was built last year and is owned by Michail Karageorgis of Piraeus, Greece.

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